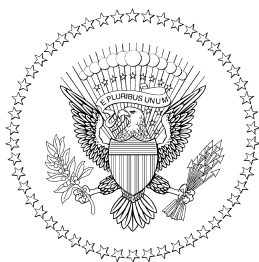


Weekly Compilation of  
**Presidential  
Documents**



Monday, May 31, 2004  
Volume 40—Number 22  
Pages 941–968

## Contents

### Addresses and Remarks

*See also* Meetings With Foreign Leaders  
Iraqis receiving medical care, meeting—949  
Ohio, discussion at Youngstown State  
University in Youngstown—950  
Pennsylvania, U.S. Army War College in  
Carlisle—944  
Radio address—942  
Tennessee, discussion at Vanderbilt University  
Medical Center in Nashville—957  
Women's National Basketball Association  
champion Detroit Shock, remarks  
honoring—943

### Communications to Federal Agencies

Waiving Prohibition on U.S. Military  
Assistance with Respect to Burkina Faso  
and Dominica, memorandum—956

### Interviews With the News Media

Exchange with reporters in the Oval Office—  
949

### Meetings With Foreign Leaders

Denmark, Prime Minister Rasmussen—963

### Proclamations

National Maritime Day—941  
National Safe Boating Week—941  
Prayer for Peace, Memorial Day—956

### Statements by the President

National economy—964

### Supplementary Materials

Acts approved by the President—967  
Checklist of White House press releases—967  
Digest of other White House  
announcements—965  
Nominations submitted to the Senate—967

## WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

---

## PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

---

Published every Monday by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408, the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* contains statements, messages, and other Presidential materials released by the White House during the preceding week.

The *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* is published pursuant to the authority contained in the Federal Register Act (49 Stat. 500, as amended; 44 U.S.C. Ch. 15), under regulations prescribed by the Administrative Committee of the Federal Register, approved by the President (37 FR 23607; 1 CFR Part 10).

Distribution is made only by the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. The *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* will be furnished by mail to domestic subscribers for \$80.00 per year (\$137.00 for mailing first class) and to foreign subscribers for \$93.75 per year, payable to the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. The charge for a single copy is \$3.00 (\$3.75 for foreign mailing).

The *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* is also available on the Internet on the GPO Access service at <http://www.gpo.gov/nara/nara003.html>.

There are no restrictions on the republication of material appearing in the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*.

**US GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE**  
SUPERINTENDENT OF DOCUMENTS  
Washington DC 20402

\_\_\_\_\_  
**OFFICIAL BUSINESS**  
Penalty for private use, \$300

**PRESORTED STANDARD**  
POSTAGE & FEES PAID  
GPO  
PERMIT NO. G-26

Week Ending Friday, May 28, 2004

**Proclamation 7789—National Maritime Day, 2004**

*May 21, 2004*

*By the President of the United States of America*

**A Proclamation**

National Maritime Day provides an opportunity to recognize the men and women of the United States Merchant Marine and their contributions to our national security and economic strength.

Since they first offered their ships and services to assist the Continental Navy in our struggle for independence, to their distinguished service in World War II, merchant mariners have courageously sacrificed to protect our country and defend our freedoms. In 1936, America recognized the contributions of these patriots and established the U.S. Merchant Marine “as a naval or military auxiliary in time of war or national emergency.” Today, merchant mariners are delivering essential supplies and equipment to our troops in Iraq and bravely serving the cause of liberty. They continue to play an important role in our Nation’s efforts to advance democracy, peace, and freedom around the world, and we are grateful for their dedication.

Merchant mariners also contribute significantly to the U.S. maritime transportation system. More than 95 percent of non-North American trade enters our country through our seaports. These ports handle more than \$740 billion and 2 billion tons of domestic and international freight each year. Those in the maritime industry, including merchant mariners, enhance waterborne commerce and help promote America’s economic growth.

Today, we honor the courage, determination, and service of our Nation’s merchant mariners and remember the many who have given their lives in defense of our country.

Their work reflects the patriotism and devotion to duty that make America great.

In recognition of the importance of the U.S. Merchant Marine, the Congress, by joint resolution approved on May 20, 1933, as amended, has designated May 22 of each year as “National Maritime Day,” and has authorized and requested that the President issue an annual proclamation calling for its appropriate observance.

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush,** President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 22, 2004, as National Maritime Day. I call upon the people of the United States to celebrate this observance and to display the flag of the United States at their homes and in their communities. I also request that all ships sailing under the American flag dress ship on that day.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-first day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 25, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 26. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Proclamation 7790—National Safe Boating Week, 2004**

*May 21, 2004*

*By the President of the United States of America*

**A Proclamation**

Our Nation’s many waterways give millions of boating enthusiasts the opportunity to

enjoy the outdoors and spend time with family and friends. With nearly 13 million recreational boats on our oceans, lakes, and rivers, boating is a popular pastime. However, far too many Americans are hurt or killed each year in boating accidents that are largely preventable.

Each year, of the thousands of boating accidents that occur, many are caused by operators who are careless, reckless, or inexperienced. In most cases, boat operators had received no safety instruction, and many of those who died could have been saved if they had worn life jackets. During National Safe Boating week, we seek to raise awareness to improve safety and reduce accidents on our Nation's waters.

Across the Nation, many groups are working to teach recreational boaters how they can make boating safer through the 2004 North American Safe Boating Campaign. These include the U.S. Coast Guard, the Coast Guard Auxiliary, the National Safe Boating Council, and the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators. These groups recommend that boaters get boat safety checks, ensure that boats are properly maintained, take safe boating classes, be aware of homeland security issues, always wear a life jacket, and never operate a boat under the influence of alcohol or drugs. By learning about boating safety and taking some simple precautions, recreational boaters can reduce the risk of accidents and ensure that they enjoy their time on the water responsibly.

In recognition of the importance of safe boating practices, the Congress, by joint resolution approved June 4, 1958 (36 U.S.C. 131), as amended, has authorized and requested the President to proclaim annually the 7-day period prior to Memorial Day weekend as "National Safe Boating Week."

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush,** President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 22 through May 28, 2004, as National Safe Boating Week. I encourage the Governors of the 50 States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and officials of other areas subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, to join in observing this occasion. I also urge all boaters to learn more about safe boating practices, always wear life

jackets, and take advantage of boating safety programs throughout the year.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-first day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 25, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 26. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

## **The President's Radio Address**

*May 22, 2004*

Good morning. This week brought further evidence that across America, more citizens are finding jobs. The Department of Labor reported State-by-State job results, and these figures show that America's jobs engine is running strong.

Nationally, we gained 288,000 new jobs in April, and the Nation has added more than 1.1 million new jobs since last August. The unemployment rate has fallen steadily and now stands at 5.6 percent, down from 6.3 percent last June and lower than the average unemployment rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

In April, the biggest job gaining States were Florida, North Carolina, Missouri, and Michigan. Forty-five States out of 50 added new workers. In some States, job creation had been strong for many months. Florida has gained more than a quarter million new jobs since December 2001. In Nevada, 90,000 new jobs have been created since January of 2002, and Missouri has added 57,000 jobs since last summer.

States that have trailed in job growth are now making progress. Wisconsin and Ohio have each added more than 30,000 new jobs this year. New Hampshire gained 2,700 new jobs in April alone. And in Oregon, the unemployment rate has fallen from a high of 8.7 percent last summer down to 6.7 percent in April as the State has added 29,000 new jobs.

These gains are the result of the hard work of Americans and a pro-growth, pro-jobs agenda that begins with tax relief. When we let the American people keep more of what they earn and save, they put that money to good use. They demand more goods and services, which creates demand for new workers. Now that our economy is expanding and adding more jobs, we need to make sure Americans keep their tax relief.

Congress has begun to act. The House of Representatives has voted to make marriage penalty relief permanent and to keep the expanded 10-percent bracket. This week the House also voted to make permanent the \$1,000 per child tax credit which is helping so many families. I congratulate the House on these important votes. Now the Senate should take action so we do not raise taxes on the American people.

To sustain our economic growth, we must also ensure affordable and reliable sources of energy. To protect consumers against high prices, the Department of Energy has established a hotline to gather complaints of price gouging. This weekend in Amsterdam, Secretary Spence Abraham is meeting with petroleum producers from around the world on actions they can take to help the U.S. and global economy. Also, we have reformed Federal regulations to allow badly needed improvements and expansion of the Nation's petroleum refineries, so that more gasoline can get to the market quickly.

But our Nation must address fundamental energy challenges that have built over time. I have increased fuel economy standards for SUVs, vans, and pickups. And 3 years ago, I submitted to Congress a national energy strategy that would address our long-term energy needs. It called for tax incentives for fuel-efficient hybrid vehicles, more exploration in places like Alaska, and greater use of ethanol, a reliable source of energy produced on our farms.

This national strategy would help make our country less dependent on foreign sources of energy. Yet, these measures have been repeatedly blocked by Members of the Senate, and American consumers are paying the price. Three years is long enough. I urge the Congress to end the delays and pass comprehensive energy legislation.

With the right policies, we will maintain the strong forward momentum of the American economy, which is creating thousands of new jobs for American workers.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 11:50 a.m. on May 21 at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, LA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 22. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 21 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

### **Remarks Honoring the 2003 Women's National Basketball Association Champion Detroit Shock May 24, 2004**

**The President.** Thank you all for coming. Welcome to the Rose Garden, and congratulations to the 2003 WNBA championship team from Detroit. That's who we're here to honor. It's good to welcome the coach. [Laughter] I don't know if 20 years ago they would have thought of you as a coach.

**Mr. Laimbeer.** I know. I know. [Laughter]

**The President.** But he made a pretty darn good one, didn't he? I'm real proud of your leadership. I want to thank Tom Wilson for being here; Val Ackerman, here as well. I want to thank the players and the coaches for coming.

This is an historic season for the Shock. After all, you went from worst to first. Isn't that right?

**Team member.** Yes, that's right. [Laughter]

**The President.** And interestingly enough, in winning the championship, you drew the largest crowd in league history, which says something about the talent and the flare and the charisma of the players. I think one of the things that good teams do is, they decide to be a team. They come together and say, "We're going to win as a team." And that's what this team did. There was tremendous discipline, hard work, and good leadership. And I'm proud of the fact, and I know the women on this team are, that you were Coach of the Year in the WNBA.

I said they came together as a team, but they had great talent. Ruth Riley was the WNBA Finals MVP. The Rookie of the Year was Cheryl Ford, and a member of the 2004 Olympic team was Swin Cash. This is a team with talent but learned to blend the talent for a greater whole.

They tell me that they changed the road there by the stadium to Three Championship Drive. Is that right?

**Team member.** Yes, that's right.

**The President.** It must be pretty intimidating for a team to pull up on Three Championship Drive to play.

I also appreciate most of all the fact that many of the players on this team are involved with helping others. I know there is a strong commitment to literacy on the team. These women understand that a child cannot succeed in America unless they can read, and I appreciate you taking your championship status and converting it into something really important in our society, besides winning basketball games.

Swin Cash and Ruth Riley have come to the National Book Festival. I know because my wife was the founder of it, and she was most appreciative. I appreciate so much the Steps to Success program, which gives the players a chance to speak to children about nutrition and exercise and self-image. In other words, these players are mentors as well as good players. They've achieved an interesting status, a championship status, and now they convert it to helping somebody change their life or somebody to be loved.

I appreciate so very much the McKeesport, Pennsylvania, effort. Coach, when you had the whole team there to distribute 20 tons of food, I mean, it's a really fine example of what a champion means.

And so today it's my honor to welcome to the Rose Garden true champs—great athletes and really fine people. Congratulations. I'm glad you're here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:08 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Tom Wilson, president and chief executive officer, Palace Sports & Entertainment; Val Ackerman, president, Women's National Basketball Association; Bill Laimbeer, head coach, and Ruth Riley, Cheryl Ford, and Swin Cash, players, Detroit Shock.

## **Remarks at the United States Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania**

*May 24, 2004*

Thank you all. Thank you, and good evening. I'm honored to visit the Army War College. Generations of officers have come here to study the strategies and history of warfare. I've come here tonight to report to all Americans and to the Iraqi people on the strategy our Nation is pursuing in Iraq and the specific steps we're taking to achieve our goals.

The actions of our enemies over the last few weeks have been brutal, calculating, and instructive. We've seen a car bombing take the life of a 61-year-old Iraqi named Izz al-Din Salim, who was serving as President of the Governing Council. This crime shows our enemy's intention to prevent Iraqi self-government, even if that means killing a lifelong Iraqi patriot and a faithful Muslim. Mr. Salim was assassinated by terrorists seeking the return of tyranny and the death of democracy.

We've also seen images of a young American facing decapitation. This vile display shows a contempt for all the rules of warfare and all the bounds of civilized behavior. It reveals a fanaticism that was not caused by any action of ours and would not be appeased by any concession. We suspect that the man with the knife was an Al Qaida associate named Zarqawi. He and other terrorists know that Iraq is now the central front in the war on terror, and we must understand that as well. The return of tyranny to Iraq would be an unprecedented terrorist victory and a cause for killers to rejoice. It would also embolden the terrorists, leading to more bombings, more beheadings, and more murders of the innocent around the world.

The rise of a free and self-governing Iraq will deny terrorists a base of operation, discredit their narrow ideology, and give momentum to reformers across the region. This will be a decisive blow to terrorism at the heart of its power and a victory for the security of America and the civilized world.

Our work in Iraq has been hard. Our coalition has faced changing conditions of war, and that has required perseverance, sacrifice, and an ability to adapt. The swift removal

of Saddam Hussein's regime last spring had an unintended effect: Instead of being killed or captured on the battlefield, some of Saddam's elite guards shed their uniforms and melted into the civilian population. These elements of Saddam's repressive regime and secret police have reorganized, re-armed, and adopted sophisticated terrorist tactics. They've linked up with foreign fighters and terrorists. In a few cities, extremists have tried to sow chaos and seize regional power for themselves. These groups and individuals have conflicting ambitions, but they share a goal: They hope to wear out the patience of Americans, our coalition, and Iraqis before the arrival of effective self-government and before Iraqis have the capability to defend their freedom.

Iraq now faces a critical moment. As the Iraqi people move closer to governing themselves, the terrorists are likely to become more active and more brutal. There are difficult days ahead, and the way forward may sometimes appear chaotic. Yet our coalition is strong, our efforts are focused and unrelenting, and no power of the enemy will stop Iraq's progress.

Helping construct a stable democracy after decades of dictatorship is a massive undertaking. Yet we have a great advantage. Whenever people are given a choice in the matter, they prefer lives of freedom to lives of fear. Our enemies in Iraq are good at filling hospitals, but they don't build any. They can incite men to murder and suicide, but they cannot inspire men to live and hope and add to the progress of their country. The terrorists' only influence is violence, and their only agenda is death.

Our agenda, in contrast, is freedom and independence, security and prosperity for the Iraqi people. And by removing a source of terrorist violence and instability in the Middle East, we also make our own country more secure.

Our coalition has a clear goal, understood by all, to see the Iraqi people in charge of Iraq for the first time in generations. America's task in Iraq is not only to defeat an enemy; it is to give strength to a friend, a free, representative government that serves its people and fights on their behalf. And the

sooner this goal is achieved, the sooner our job will be done.

There are five steps in our plan to help Iraq achieve democracy and freedom. We will hand over authority to a sovereign Iraqi government, help establish security, continue rebuilding Iraq's infrastructure, encourage more international support, and move toward a national election that will bring forward new leaders empowered by the Iraqi people.

The first of these steps will occur next month, when our coalition will transfer full sovereignty to a government of Iraqi citizens who will prepare the way for national elections. On June 30th, the Coalition Provisional Authority will cease to exist and will not be replaced. The occupation will end, and Iraqis will govern their own affairs. America's Ambassador to Iraq, John Negroponte, will present his credentials to the new President of Iraq. Our Embassy in Baghdad will have the same purpose as any other American Embassy, to assure good relations with a sovereign nation. America and other countries will continue to provide technical experts to help Iraq's ministries of government, but these ministries will report to Iraq's new Prime Minister.

The United Nations special envoy, Lakhdar Brahimi, is now consulting with a broad spectrum of Iraqis to determine the composition of this interim government. The special envoy intends to put forward the names of interim government officials this week. In addition to a President, two Vice Presidents, and a Prime Minister, 26 Iraqi ministers will oversee government departments from health to justice to defense. This new government will be advised by a national council, which will be chosen in July by Iraqis representing their country's diversity. This interim government will exercise full sovereignty until national elections are held. America fully supports Mr. Brahimi's efforts, and I have instructed the Coalition Provisional Authority to assist him in every way possible.

In preparation for sovereignty, many functions of government have already been transferred. Twelve government ministries are currently under the direct control of Iraqis. The Ministry of Education, for example, is out of the propaganda business and is now



concerned with educating Iraqi children. Under the direction of Dr. Aladin al-Alwan, the Ministry has trained more than 30,000 teachers and supervisors for the schools of a new Iraq.

All along, some have questioned whether the Iraqi people are ready for self-government or want it. And all along, the Iraqi people have given their answer. In settings where Iraqis have met to discuss their country's future, they have endorsed representative government, and they are practicing representative government. Many of Iraq's cities and towns now have elected town councils and city governments, and beyond the violence, a civil society is emerging.

The June 30th transfer of sovereignty is an essential commitment of our strategy. Iraqis are proud people who resent foreign control of their affairs, just as we would. After decades under the tyrant, they are also reluctant to trust authority. By keeping our promise on June 30th, the coalition will demonstrate that we have no interest in occupation. And full sovereignty will give Iraqis a direct interest in the success of their own government. Iraqis will know that when they build a school or repair a bridge, they're not working for the Coalition Provisional Authority; they are working for themselves. And when they patrol the streets of Baghdad or engage radical militias, they will be fighting for their own country.

The second step in the plan for Iraqi democracy is to help establish the stability and security that democracy requires. Coalition forces and the Iraqi people have the same enemies, the terrorists, illegal militia, and Saddam loyalists who stand between the Iraqi people and their future as a free nation. Working as allies, we will defend Iraq and defeat these enemies.

America will provide forces and support necessary for achieving these goals. Our commanders had estimated that a troop level below 115,000 would be sufficient at this point in the conflict. Given the recent increase in violence, we'll maintain our troop level at the current 138,000 as long as necessary. This has required extended duty for the 1st Armored Division and the 2d Light Cavalry Regiment, 20,000 men and women who were scheduled to leave Iraq in April.

Our Nation appreciates their hard work and sacrifice, and they can know that they will be heading home soon. General Abizaid and other commanders in Iraq are constantly assessing the level of troops they need to fulfill the mission. If they need more troops, I will send them. The mission of our forces in Iraq is demanding and dangerous. Our troops are showing exceptional skill and courage. I thank them for their sacrifices and their duty.

In the city of Fallujah, there's been considerable violence by Saddam loyalists and foreign fighters, including the murder of four American contractors. American soldiers and marines could have used overwhelming force. Our commanders, however, consulted with Iraq's Governing Council and local officials and determined that massive strikes against the enemy would alienate the local population and increase support for the insurgency, so we have pursued a different approach. We're making security a shared responsibility in Fallujah. Coalition commanders have worked with local leaders to create an all-Iraqi security force, which is now patrolling the city. Our soldiers and marines will continue to disrupt enemy attacks on our supply routes, conduct joint patrols with Iraqis to destroy bomb factories and safe houses, and kill or capture any enemy.

We want Iraqi forces to gain experience and confidence in dealing with their country's enemies. We want the Iraqi people to know that we trust their growing capabilities, even as we help build them. At the same time, Fallujah must cease to be a sanctuary for the enemy, and those responsible for terrorism will be held to account.

In the cities of Najaf and Karbala and Kufa, most of the violence has been incited by a young, radical cleric who commands an illegal militia. These enemies have been hiding behind an innocent civilian population, storing arms and ammunition in mosques, and launching attacks from holy shrines. Our soldiers have treated religious sites with respect while systematically dismantling the illegal militia.

We're also seeing Iraqis, themselves, take more responsibility for restoring order. In recent weeks, Iraqi forces have ejected elements of this militia from the Governor's office in Najaf. Yesterday, an elite Iraqi unit

cleared out a weapons cache from a large mosque in Kufa. Respected Shi'a leaders have called on the militia to withdraw from these towns. Ordinary Iraqis have marched in protest against the militants.

As challenges rise in Fallujah, Najaf, and elsewhere, the tactics of our military will be flexible. Commanders on the ground will pay close attention to local conditions. And we will do all that is necessary by measured force or overwhelming force to achieve a stable Iraq.

Iraq's military, police, and border forces have begun to take on broader responsibilities. Eventually, they must be the primary defenders of Iraqi security, as American and coalition forces are withdrawn. And we're helping them to prepare for this role. In some cases, the early performance of Iraqi forces fell short. Some refused orders to engage the enemy. We've learned from these failures, and we've taken steps to correct them. Successful fighting units need a sense of cohesion, so we've lengthened and intensified their training. Successful units need to know they are fighting for the future of their own country, not for any occupying power, so we are ensuring that Iraqi forces serve under an Iraqi chain of command. Successful fighting units need the best possible leadership, so we improved the vetting and training of Iraqi officers and senior enlisted men.

At my direction and with the support of Iraqi authorities, we are accelerating our program to help train Iraqis to defend their country. A new team of senior military officers is now assessing every unit in Iraq's security forces. I've asked this team to oversee the training of a force of 260,000 Iraqi soldiers, police, and other security personnel. Five Iraqi army battalions are in the field now, with another eight battalions to join them by July the 1st. The eventual goal is an Iraqi army of 35,000 soldiers in 27 battalions, fully prepared to defend their country.

After June 30th, American and other forces will still have important duties. American military forces in Iraq will operate under American command as a part of a multinational force authorized by the United Nations. Iraq's new sovereign government will still face enormous security challenges, and our forces will be there to help.

The third step in the plan for Iraqi democracy is to continue rebuilding that nation's infrastructure so that a free Iraq can quickly gain economic independence and a better quality of life. Our coalition has already helped Iraqis to rebuild schools and refurbish hospitals and health clinics, repair bridges, upgrade the electrical grid, and modernize the communications system. And now a growing private economy is taking shape. A new currency has been introduced. Iraq's Governing Council approved a new law that opens the country to foreign investment for the first time in decades. Iraq has liberalized its trade policy, and today an Iraqi observer attends meetings of the World Trade Organization. Iraqi oil production has reached more than two million barrels per day, bringing revenues of nearly \$6 billion so far this year, which is being used to help the people of Iraq. And thanks in part to our efforts—to the efforts of former Secretary of State James Baker, many of Iraq's largest creditors have pledged to forgive or substantially reduce Iraqi debt incurred by the former regime.

We're making progress. Yet there still is much work to do. Over the decades of Saddam's rule, Iraq's infrastructure was allowed to crumble while money was diverted to palaces and to wars and to weapons programs. We're urging other nations to contribute to Iraqi reconstruction, and 37 countries and the IMF and the World Bank have so far pledged \$13.5 billion in aid. America has dedicated more than \$20 billion to reconstruction and development projects in Iraq. To ensure our money is spent wisely and effectively, our new Embassy in Iraq will have regional offices in several key cities. These offices will work closely with Iraqis at all levels of government to help make sure projects are completed on time and on budget.

A new Iraq will also need a humane, well-supervised prison system. Under the dictator, prisons like Abu Ghraib were symbols of death and torture. That same prison became a symbol of disgraceful conduct by a few American troops who dishonored our country and disregarded our values. America will fund the construction of a modern maximum security prison. When that prison is completed, detainees at Abu Ghraib will be relocated. Then, with the approval of the Iraqi

government, we will demolish the Abu Ghraib prison, as a fitting symbol of Iraq's new beginning.

The fourth step in our plan is to enlist additional international support for Iraq's transition. At every stage, the United States has gone to the United Nations—to confront Saddam Hussein, to promise serious consequences for his actions, and to begin Iraqi reconstruction. Today the United States and Great Britain presented a new resolution in the Security Council to help move Iraq toward self-government. I've directed Secretary Powell to work with fellow members of the Council to endorse the timetable the Iraqis have adopted, to express international support for Iraq's interim government, to reaffirm the world's security commitment to the Iraqi people, and to encourage other U.N. members to join in the effort. Despite past disagreements, most nations have indicated strong support for the success of a free Iraq, and I'm confident they will share in the responsibility of assuring that success.

Next month, at the NATO summit in Istanbul, I will thank our 15 NATO Allies who together have more than 17,000 troops on the ground in Iraq. Great Britain and Poland are each leading a multinational division that is securing important parts of the country. And NATO, itself, is giving helpful intelligence and communications and logistical support to the Polish-led division. At the summit, we will discuss NATO's role in helping Iraq build and secure its democracy.

The fifth and most important step is free national elections to be held no later than next January. A United Nations team headed by Carina Perelli is now in Iraq, helping form an independent election commission that will oversee an orderly, accurate national election. In that election, the Iraqi people will choose a transitional national assembly, the first freely elected, truly representative national governing body in Iraq's history. This assembly will serve as Iraq's legislature, and it will choose a transitional government with executive powers. The transitional national assembly will also draft a new constitution, which will be presented to the Iraqi people in a referendum scheduled for the fall of 2005. Under this new constitution, Iraq will

elect a permanent government by the end of next year.

In this time of war and liberation and rebuilding, American soldiers and civilians on the ground have come to know and respect the citizens of Iraq. They're a proud people who hold strong and diverse opinions. Yet Iraqis are united in a broad and deep conviction: They're determined never again to live at the mercy of a dictator, and they believe that a national election will put that dark time behind them. A representative government that protects basic rights, elected by Iraqis, is the best defense against the return of tyranny, and that election is coming.

Completing the five steps to Iraqi elected self-government will not be easy. There's likely to be more violence before the transfer of sovereignty and after the transfer of sovereignty. The terrorists and Saddam loyalists would rather see many Iraqis die than have any live in freedom, but terrorists will not determine the future of Iraq.

That nation is moving every week toward free elections and a permanent place among free nations. Like every nation that has made the journey to democracy, Iraqis will raise up a government that reflects their own culture and values. I sent American troops to Iraq to defend our security, not to stay as an occupying power. I sent American troops to Iraq to make its people free, not to make them American. Iraqis will write their own history and find their own way. As they do, Iraqis can be certain, a free Iraq will always have a friend in the United States of America.

In the last 32 months, history has placed great demands on our country, and events have come quickly. Americans have seen the flames of September the 11th, followed battles in the mountains of Afghanistan, and learned new terms like "orange alert" and "ricin" and "dirty bomb." We've seen killers at work on trains in Madrid, in a bank in Istanbul, at a synagogue in Tunis, and at a nightclub in Bali. And now the families of our soldiers and civilian workers pray for their sons and daughters in Mosul and Karbala and Baghdad.

We did not seek this war on terror, but this is the world as we find it. We must keep our focus. We must do our duty. History is

moving, and it will tend toward hope or tend toward tragedy. Our terrorist enemies have a vision that guides and explains all their varied acts of murder. They seek to impose Taliban-like rule, country by country, across the greater Middle East. They seek the total control of every person and mind and soul, a harsh society in which women are voiceless and brutalized. They seek bases of operation to train more killers and export more violence. They commit dramatic acts of murder to shock, frighten, and demoralize civilized nations, hoping we will retreat from the world and give them free rein. They seek weapons of mass destruction to impose their will through blackmail and catastrophic attacks. None of this is the expression of a religion. It is a totalitarian political ideology, pursued with consuming zeal and without conscience.

Our actions too are guided by a vision. We believe that freedom can advance and change lives in the greater Middle East as it has advanced and changed lives in Asia and Latin America and Eastern Europe and Africa. We believe it is a tragedy of history that in the Middle East, which gave the world great gifts of law and science and faith, so many have been held back by lawless tyranny and fanaticism. We believe that when all Middle Eastern peoples are finally allowed to live and think and work and worship as free men and women, they will reclaim the greatness of their own heritage. And when that day comes, the bitterness and burning hatreds that feed terrorism will fade and die away. America and all the world will be safer when hope has returned to the Middle East.

These two visions—one of tyranny and murder, the other of liberty and life—clashed in Afghanistan. And thanks to brave U.S. and coalition forces and to Afghan patriots, the nightmare of the Taliban is over, and that nation is coming to life again. These two visions have now met in Iraq and are contending for the future of that country. The failure of freedom would only mark the beginning of peril and violence. But my fellow Americans, we will not fail. We will persevere and defeat this enemy and hold this hard-won ground for the realm of liberty.

May God bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8 p.m. in the Thorpe Hall gymnasium. In his remarks, he referred to American hostage Nicholas Berg, who was killed in Iraq in early May by senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Lakhdar Brahimi, Special Adviser to the U.N. Secretary-General; Aladin Abd al-Sahib al-Alwan, Iraqi Minister of Education; Gen. John P. Abizaid, USA, combatant commander, U.S. Central Command; Muqtada Al Sadr, Iraq Shiite cleric whose militia engaged in an uprising in Iraq that began in early April; James A. Baker III, the President's personal envoy on the issue of Iraqi debt; and Carina Perelli, Director, United Nations Electoral Assistance Division, who heads the United Nations electoral mission to Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

### Remarks Following a Meeting With Iraqis Receiving Medical Care and an Exchange With Reporters

May 25, 2004

**The President.** I'm honored to shake the hand of a brave Iraqi citizen who had his hand cut off by Saddam Hussein. I'm with six other Iraqi citizens as well who suffered the same fate. They are examples of the brutality of the tyrant.

I am also here with Marvin Zindler of Houston, Texas. I appreciate Joe Agris, the doctor who helped put these hands on these men; Don North, the documentary producer who made a film of this brutality, which brought the plight of these gentlemen to the attention of Marvin and his foundation. These men had hands restored because of the generosity and love of an American citizen, and I am so proud to welcome them to the Oval Office.

I assured them we have a plan to help Iraq achieve free elections. We'll transfer full sovereignty. They were pleased to hear that America will stay and help with security. We will continue to work on reconstruction matters. I assured them I will continue to ask the world to help. And they want to vote. They want to have elections, and they're going back to Iraq soon, and we're so proud to have them here in the Oval Office.

Again, thank you, sir, for coming.

**Mr. Kadim.** Thank you very much.

**The President.** I appreciate you. Thank you. Please be seated, and I'll answer a couple of questions.

Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

**Lt. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez**

**Q.** Mr. President, can you say why General Sanchez is being replaced as the top commander in Iraq? Is that in any way related to the prisoner abuse scandal? And who is going to replace him?

**The President.** Rick Sanchez has done a fabulous job. He's been there for a long time. His service has been exemplary, and the Defense Department will add further comments to it.

Mike [Mike Emmanuel, FOX News], welcome. It's good to see you.

**Transfer of Sovereignty in Iraq**

**Q.** Mr. President, Chirac's office is quoted as saying that President Chirac told you that the transfer of power has to be real.

**The President.** Yes.

**Q.** Can you describe what you may have said to him to reassure him that the transfer of power would be real?

**The President.** Yes, what President Chirac and others have said is they want to make sure that the transfer of sovereignty to the interim government is a real transfer. And that's what we want. We want there to be a complete and real transfer of sovereignty so that the Iraqi citizens realize the fate of their country is now their responsibility. And we'll be there to help, and we'll help in a variety of ways. We'll help by making sure our security forces are there to work with their security forces. We'll help to make sure the reconstruction money we have set aside is well spent. We'll help by getting—to continue to work with other countries to help aid a free Iraq. We'll do what we need to do to help the interim government succeed in getting to the period of free elections. And I had a great conversation with President Chirac. We share the same goal, a free and stable and peaceful Iraq.

Yes, Dick [Richard Keil, Bloomberg News].

**Q.** Mr. President, looking forward a bit to the elections that you'd like to see in Iraq, is it imperative for Iraq to end up with a

democracy? Or are free elections enough to satisfy your aims at this point?

**The President.** What's imperative is that the Iraqi citizens develop a constitution that they can call their own, a constitution written and approved by Iraqis. As I said last night, our intention was never to have Iraq look like America. Our intention is for Iraq to be free and stable and whole, at peace with its neighbors.

A free Iraq will help change the history of the greater Middle East. A free Iraq will show the rest of the world that when people are given a chance to raise their families in peace and security, a civil society that's stable and hopeful will develop, and that's what we want. We want a society where the men who've suffered so much because of the whims of one brutal man—where their children can grow up and realize their full potential, where the schools work, where the health care system is good. And there's no doubt in my mind that Iraq can achieve this great dream and vision. And there's no doubt in my mind, some day their children will come to America and say, "Thank goodness America stood the line and was strong and did not falter in the face of the violence of a few."

Listen, thank you all for coming. I'm proud to have you here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:02 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Marvin Zindler, member, board of directors, and Joseph Agris, chief executive officer and founder, Agris-Zindler Children's Fund; and Lt. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez, USA, commander, Coalition Joint Task Force Seven.

### Remarks in a Discussion at Youngstown State University in Youngstown, Ohio

May 25, 2004

**The President.** Well, thank you, Ron. Thanks. Listen, thanks for coming. As you can see, I'm joined by some of your fellow citizens here to have a dialog about health care. And there's some really amazing things going on in the Youngstown area as well as across the country to make sure people have got a safety net. And that's what we're going

to discuss, community health centers and why they're important for Ohio, why they're important for the country, and how they fit into a strategy to make sure we do a better job of controlling costs as well as making sure people get health care. That's what we're here to discuss.

We've got some real experts here that I'll be introducing in a minute, people who have actually used community health centers, people who work in a community health center, people who run community health centers, and people who oversee community health centers. We've got the whole spectrum of the community health center world right here in Youngstown to discuss why they're important.

Before I do, first of all I want to thank Tony Atwater, the provost of this fine university. Tony, thank you very much. You're a good man to host us. It's not easy to welcome the President. *[Laughter]* The entourages are quite large these days. But I'm really proud that we could visit your beautiful campus, and thanks a lot for the hospitality.

Tom Van Coverden is the president and CEO of the National Association of Health Care Centers. Tom, thanks for coming, glad you're here.

George McKelvey is with us. Mr. Mayor, it's good to see you. Thank you for your service. See you tomorrow. Mr. Mayor and I first met on a train, didn't we, 4 years ago. Thanks for coming by. You're doing a fine job here. And the mayor told me when I first met him, he said, "My vision is a modern Youngstown." And you're making it come true. I'm proud of your service—doing a great job.

And the mayor of Alliance is with us, Toni Middleton. Where are you, Mr. Mayor? There you go. Thanks for coming. The reason Toni is here, I think a community health center is opening up in Alliance.

**Mayor Middleton.** Yes, we opened up in December.

**The President.** Good. See, Mr. Mayor, you've got yourself a good asset in your community, which we'll be discussing here shortly.

Listen, when I landed at the airport, I met a fellow named Sid Harris. I'm about to introduce Sid. He has been an active volunteer at a local hospital for 15 years, where he's

performed over 4,000 hours of volunteer help. Sid is a—he holds fundraisers so that children with heart problems can go to camp in Virginia. He sends nursing students to Youngstown State University. Sid is a soldier in the army of compassion. Sid is right here. Sid, why don't you stand up, if you don't mind. Thank you, Sid. His wife pointed out to me when I got off the plane, Sid may not be able to see you, but he sure can hear you. *[Laughter]*

And the thing about Sid is, is that he is such a loving guy that he wants to help somebody in life. That's what he wants to do. We talk about the strength of the country being the U.S. military, and we're going to keep it strong so the world will be more peaceful and free. We talk about one of our strengths being the fact that we're a wealthy nation compared to other nations, and that's the way we want it. We've got to make sure we remain the best place in the world to risk capital so people can work. But the true strength of the country is in the hearts and souls of our citizens. That's the true strength of America. The true strength of our country is the fact that people like Sid are willing to take time out of their lives to make somebody else's life better.

We've got people in our country who hurt, who are lonely, who wonder whether or not the future belongs to them, whether or not there's any brighter day. And we've got people in our country who are willing to surround the lonely with love and to help. See, that's the strength of America. And the reason I like to talk about the Sid Harrises of the world is to thank those here and those around Youngstown and those around the country who are doing the same thing, and to call upon others to love your neighbor like you'd like to be loved yourself. We all can save America, one heart and one soul at a time. And Sid Harris is a part. I appreciate you coming, Sid.

There's an interesting debate in Washington about health care. My view is, is that we need to empower consumers and doctors. We need to make sure the patient-doctor relationship is the center of health care decisionmaking, not Washington, DC. We need to make sure that we put good policy in place that helps patients.

One of the things that you're going to see happening here very quickly is drug discount cards will be sent out to senior citizens. It's a good thing. You take those drug discount cards, and you'll be able to—this is part of Medicare reform, making the Medicare system better. And the drug discount cards will allow seniors to save between 15 to 25 percent off of brandname medicines and more off of generic drugs. There's a market over the Internet, kind of, that's taking place—in other words, people are now posting price so consumers have got the ability to choose price. And that is causing more price efficiency in the marketplace. It's a positive thing that's beginning to take place.

By the way, poor seniors will get a \$600 credit on their card. Many drug companies have said they're going to—once the \$600 credit is used, they'll extend to help the poorest of seniors with drug prices. It's a positive development.

Medicare reform is going to work, and it's going to work well. It fully kicks in in the year 2006. The first stage is the drug discount cards that are now being sent out.

Secondly, we've passed what's called health savings accounts. I suspect there's some small-business people here. These are particularly beneficial for individuals and small businesses. This will allow you to put money into a health savings account tax-free, earn interest on it tax-free, take it out tax-free to pay for ordinary medical expenses as well as to pay for a high-deductible, low-cost medical catastrophic policy. It's a good way to help control costs. It's a new innovation that is beginning to get in the marketplace, all aimed at helping to control medical costs and making sure the patient-doctor relationship is the center of medical decisionmaking processes.

We need what's called association health care plans. This will allow small businesses to pool risk so they can have the same purchasing power as large businesses do. I believe there ought to be tax credits for the working uninsured.

And I know you need medical liability reform here in the State of Ohio and across the United States. Here's why. Junk and frivolous lawsuits cause docs to have to practice what's called defensive medicine. In other

words, they practice more medicine than you need in order to make sure that if and when they get sued, they've got a good case. Secondly, junk and frivolous lawsuits mean their premiums go up for their medical liability insurance, which means your bills go up. Thirdly, junk and frivolous lawsuits discourage good docs from even practicing medicine in the first place. If you want health care to be affordable and available, you need to have a legal system that is fair and balanced.

I believe this is a national issue because it runs up the cost of medicine for national budgets. The Medicare budget goes up. The Medicaid budget goes up. The veterans' health care system costs go up. And we need law coming out of Washington to make medical liability reform the law of the land. It passed the House; it's stuck in the Senate.

These are practical ways to address the rising cost of health care, the availability of health care, all aimed at making sure the patient and the doc are the center of the health care decisionmaking process.

Now, one of the problems we got here in America is that there are some people, quite a few people, who need primary care, a place where they can go get help when they need it. The problem, oftentimes people go to the emergency room, which is very cost-inefficient. It costs the taxpayers money. The emergency room ought to be used for true emergencies, not for the primary care of health care—primary health care for people who can't afford health care. So the Government wisely set up what's called community health centers. These are facilities where—that provide primary and prenatal care, checkups, immunization, preventative treatments to anybody who needs them. In other words, this is a part of the safety net. This is a wise expenditure of taxpayers' money. It relieves pressure off the emergency rooms, and it provides a safety net for some of the citizens in our communities.

We provide care up to about 13 million people a year, I think. I think it's important for us to continue to either expand existing community health centers or build new ones. The goal I set when I first got elected was

that we would expand them by 1,200—expand or build 1,200 new ones. We've accomplished half of that goal. I'm asking for Congress to accomplish the other half of the goal over the next couple of years. This is wise use—[*applause*].

These things make sense. It's a heck of a lot better system than having the entire health care system federalized. This makes a lot of sense to make sure that we recognize in our society people can't afford health care, and they need access to health care. And it's a practical way to do so.

Today you're going to hear from people who've used the community health centers. You're also going to hear about a doc who works at the community health center. But I first want to start off with Betty Duke. Her job is—well, she's got a pretty fancy title. She's the Administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration, HSRA—HRSA—[*laughter*]*—*in Rockville, Maryland. She works for Tommy Thompson, who is my Cabinet Secretary for Health and Human Services. She's got such a complicated job, it required a Ph.D. But her job is to oversee this health center initiative, the expansion of existing health centers or the building of new ones in communities where there is a need.

Why don't you tell us, Betty, just anything you want to say, you're welcome. It's your mike.

[*Dr. Duke made brief remarks.*]

**The President.** Yes, I appreciate—one of the things—we're trying to get up to serving 16 million people, see. There's a lot of discussion about whether or not people have got access to health care. This is access to health care in a practical way—16 million people—[*applause*].

They treat bicycle injuries? [*Laughter*] I was wearing my helmet, I want you to know. [*Laughter*]

Ron, you're the CEO of the Ohio North East Health Systems, Inc. That's a long title for—

**Ronald Dwinnells.** We call it "ONE," as in "Number One." [*Laughter*]

**The President.** "Number One?" Okay. You're the health CEO of "Number One," then. So, like, what is your—how many of

these centers do you run? How long have you been running centers? How often are they open?

[*Dr. Dwinnells made brief remarks.*]

**The President.** Tell people why it's—I think they're cost-effective, otherwise I wouldn't be asking them to expand. Do you think they're—of course you think they're cost-effective. [*Laughter*] You're not a lawyer, but it's a leading question. [*Laughter*]

**Dr. Dwinnells.** Yes, I definitely think it's very cost-effective. This year, we're anticipating 60,000 visits. We have a \$5 million a year budget this year. This is compared to \$600,000 in 1998. So there's been a huge growth. I believe—[*inaudible*]*—*I saw figures once where to care for a patient through community health centers, it was an ungodly small amount, a dollar-something per encounter. And it's amazing, because it's run close to—

**The President.** —goes to an emergency room, or no care at all until it's too late—until, in other words, somebody gets so sick that they show up requiring a much greater bill. It's going to be—it will cost them a lot of money if we don't take care of our problem early.

[*Dr. Dwinnells made further remarks.*]

**The President.** Right. One of the things I forgot to ask Betty about was the National Health Service Corps.

[*Dr. Duke made further remarks.*]

**The President.** I appreciate you doing that. In other words, what Betty does is not only see the construction and—oversee the construction or expansion of these facilities, her job also is to provide incentive to health care providers to show up and work there. And that's good. It's a good program. And part of it is to forgive loan.

**Dr. Dwinnells.** Mr. President, can I say—

**The President.** Yes, absolutely.

**Dr. Dwinnells.** I'm a National Health Service Corps alumni.

**The President.** Are you? Good.

**Dr. Dwinnells.** Yes, and I'm still here. [*Laughter*]



**The President.** We've got somebody who works for you here. Compton. Compton, I'm glad you're here.

**Compton Girdharry.** Thank you, Mr. President.

**The President.** Comp's a doc. What kind of doc are you?

**Dr. Girdharry.** I'm an obstetrician/gynecologist, Mr. President.

**The President.** How long have you been practicing medicine?

**Dr. Girdharry.** I was practicing for 21 years in the city of Alliance.

**The President.** And?

**Dr. Girdharry.** And I was unfortunately forced out—to give up that practice because of the rising cost of malpractice insurance.

**The President.** Let me stop you there. You hear me talk about the need for medical liability reform. You need to do it Ohio. We need to do it in Washington. Listen, everybody ought to have their day in court, but a reasonable person must know that the system is totally out of whack—totally out of whack when you start driving people out of business, people who you need in your communities. Fortunately—I didn't mean to tell your story for you—[laughter]—fortunately, you found a home.

[Dr. Girdharry made further remarks.]

**The President.** Doc, I'm here thanking you, see? [Laughter] You're the guy who's helping make people's lives better, and I appreciate that.

One of the interesting things is—and so, you were worried about medical liability reform—I mean, liability insurance as a private doc. What about now when you work here?

**Dr. Girdharry.** That's the great thing about it. Being in sole practice, I actually was administering my whole practice, and my practice was a major headache. So now, with the Federal tort, I don't have to worry about that.

**The President.** Yes, in other words, the Government helps with the——

**Dr. Girdharry.** That is correct.

**The President.** Isn't that right, Betty?

**Dr. Duke.** That's correct. That's correct. We have a program in which we provide insurance for the health providers who work in our system.

**The President.** See, I want people who might be listening out there, who are docs out there, who are wondering whether or not it makes sense to go and lend their services and their expertise and their compassion to a community health center to understand that it's a good place to show—to do your skill; it's a good place to come.

Are you still looking for docs?

**Dr. Duke.** We are always looking for docs, and we make it really good for them to come to work for us.

**The President.** You do? Good. Well, you've got living proof of it right here in Compton.

Anything else you want to say, Compton, now that you've got the floor? [Laughter]

**Dr. Girdharry.** I think also that the health clinic is a great idea because a lot of my patients, when I went out of business, are traveling right now to different cities. And the problem is that a lot of them don't seek the health care because they either can't afford it or they can't do the distance and they have young kids at home. So it is a major help for these people.

**The President.** Well, that's good. Thanks, appreciate you being here. Thanks for your compassion. I'm glad you're here.

Cindy.

**Cynthia Sacco.** Yes.

**The President.** Got the mike there.

**Ms. Sacco.** Got the mike.

**The President.** Which one is your grandson?

**Ms. Sacco.** That handsome gentleman right there.

**The President.** In the uniform? Thanks for your service, Sergeant, appreciate it. Your grandmother was bragging on you. That's right. [Laughter]

Cindy, thanks. Tell us your story.

[Ms. Sacco made brief remarks.]

**The President.** So the center is sitting there, you go in——

**Ms. Sacco.** No insurance.

**The President.** Right.

**Ms. Sacco.** Didn't matter.

**The President.** Right. That's what they're there for.

**Ms. Sacco.** Come on in.

**The President.** That's exactly why we need to expand them. And, obviously, we want people to have insurance, need to work—encourage people to have insurance. There's ways to do so in a cost-effective way as well through tax credits. Some don't have insurance. Some are too poor. Some are sick. Some have never been to a doctor in their life. These centers are available. You not only go to the center, you obviously find a specialist or they find a specialist for you.

**Ms. Sacco.** They found him for me.

**The President.** Right, yes.

**Ms. Sacco.** They took care of everything. They don't only take care of you physically, the staff, from the doctors on down, take care of your emotional needs, your well-being.

**The President.** Kind of like a hospice.

**Ms. Sacco.** It's wonderful. The staff there is unbelievable.

**Dr. Dwinnells.** We look at the total well-being of the person, not just the disease but the overall total. It's a holistic approach.

**The President.** And so do you have—so you have volunteers there who help post-surgery—

**Dr. Dwinnells.** Well, they're not volunteers. We pay them. *[Laughter]* We have some volunteers.

**The President.** Paid volunteers. *[Laughter]* That's good. *[Laughter]*

You got anything else you want to say? I'm proud of your sons. Her other son is a marine in Haiti, serving our country.

**Ms. Sacco.** Grandson. That's their mommy, right there.

**The President.** I mean, grandson. What am I saying? Where's Mom? Hey, Mom, how are you? Are you the—you've got the same pictures on; that's good. I'm proud of them; that's good. Yes, tell them thanks. Well, already told one thanks. Tell the other one thanks. You don't look old enough. *[Laughter]*

**Ms. Sacco.** Nor do I. *[Laughter]*

**The President.** I was just about to say that. *[Laughter]*

**Ms. Sacco.** I'm cuing you. *[Laughter]*

**The President.** I quit. *[Laughter]*

Joyce Phifer is with us as well. Joyce, thank you for coming—a mom of 11 children. Any of them here?

**Ms. Phifer.** Yes, my son is here.

**The President.** Your son is here?

**Ms. Phifer.** He too was in the service until he had to have a kidney transplant.

**The President.** Where is he?

**Ms. Phifer.** He's there.

**The President.** There he is. Thank you, sir. Welcome.

*[Ms. Phifer made brief remarks.]*

**The President.** This is a fantastic story. And the operation was in January?

**Ms. Phifer.** In January.

**The President.** This year?

**Ms. Phifer.** This year.

**The President.** You look great. *[Laughter]* That's right. I hope this helps you understand a key aspect of our strategy, to make sure that our health care system is available to citizens from all walks of life. And that's really important for our society, is to have a health care system that is—that meets the needs of every patient and every consumer.

And one way to do it is to expand—one part of the strategy is to expand community health centers. It's a commonsense approach to making sure that the health care system works. You see, it's a commonsense approach to making sure the system meets the needs without centralizing the decisionmaking process in Washington, DC. I think this system is—this approach is a much better approach.

It's—obviously, there's more that needs to be done. I mentioned several key things: Expand health savings accounts; make sure the Medicare reform continues forth; medical liability reform; association health care plans; tax credits for the uninsured—but all of it fitting together makes sense so that the country can be proud of the health care system, so docs can feel comfortable practicing medicine in the health care system, so that we can remain the best place in the world to get health care.

And one of the challenges we face is to make sure the health care system responds to the needs of the citizens. Another challenge we face is to make sure we secure our country. And I can assure you, I will use every asset at my disposal to make sure the American homeland is safe and secure.

We have faced a lot of challenges in this Nation, but our spirit is strong, our sight and

vision is clear. America understands where we need to go. We need to be compassionate at home, and we need to be firm and resolved abroad as we spread freedom and peace.

It is such an honor to be here. I want to thank the folks who were willing to share their stories with you all and with me. I hope you have a better understanding of a key component of how America's health care system will work better as we head out into the 21st century.

May God bless the citizens of this community, and may God continue to bless our country. Thank you for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:40 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor George McKelvey of Youngstown, OH; and Mayor Toni E. Middleton of Alliance, OH.

**Memorandum on Waiving  
Prohibition on United States Military  
Assistance With Respect to Burkina  
Faso and Dominica**

*May 25, 2004*

Presidential Determination No. 2004-31

*Memorandum for the Secretary of State*

*Subject:* Waiving Prohibition on United States Military Assistance with Respect to Burkina Faso and Dominica

Consistent with the authority vested in me by section 2007 of the American Servicemembers' Protection Act of 2002 (the "Act"), title II of Public Law 107-206 (22 U.S.C. 7421 *et seq.*), I hereby:

- Determine that Burkina Faso and Dominica have each entered into an agreement with the United States pursuant to Article 98 of the Rome Statute preventing the International Criminal Court from processing against U.S. personnel present in such countries; and
- Waive the prohibition of section 2007(a) of the Act with respect to these countries for as long as such agreement remains in force.

You are authorized and directed to report this determination to the Congress and to ar-

range for its publication in the *Federal Register*.

**George W. Bush**

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 26.

**Proclamation 7791—Prayer for  
Peace, Memorial Day, 2004**

*May 26, 2004*

*By the President of the United States  
of America*

**A Proclamation**

For more than two centuries, Americans have been called to defend the founding ideals of our democracy. On Memorial Day, a grateful Nation remembers the proud patriots who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of liberty's blessings.

From the opening battles of the American Revolution through the turmoil of the Civil War, to World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, to the Persian Gulf and today's operations in the war on terror in Afghanistan, Iraq, and around the world, the members of our military have built a tradition of honorable and faithful service. As we observe Memorial Day, we remember the more than one million Americans who have died to preserve our freedom, the more than 140,000 citizens who were prisoners of war, and all those who were declared missing in action. We also honor our veterans for their dedication to America and their sacrifice.

This year, we honor many heroes by observing the 60th anniversary of D-Day on the beaches of Normandy, and by dedicating the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. In a radio address on June 6, 1944, President Franklin Roosevelt described these service members as the "pride of our Nation," who struggled to preserve our civilization. The fallen from that fateful day and that war will always be remembered. They hold a cherished place in the history of the United States and in the memories of the people they liberated.

Today, all who wear the uniform of the United States are serving at a crucial hour in history, and each has answered a great call to serve our Nation on the front lines of freedom. As we continue to fight terrorism and promote peace and freedom, let us pray for the safety and strength of our troops, for God's blessing on them and their families, and for those who have lost loved ones.

On this Memorial Day, we honor all of our fallen soldiers, their commitment to our country, and their legacy of patriotism and sacrifice. By giving their lives in the cause of freedom, these heroes have protected and inspired all Americans.

In respect for their devotion to America, the Congress, by a joint resolution approved on May 11, 1950, as amended (64 Stat. 158), has requested the President to issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe each Memorial Day as a day of prayer for permanent peace and designating a period on that day when the people of the United States might unite in prayer. The Congress, by Public Law 106-579, has also designated the minute beginning at 3:00 p.m. local time on that day as a time for all Americans to observe the National Moment of Remembrance.

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush,** President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Memorial Day, May 31, 2004, as a day of prayer for permanent peace, and I designate the hour beginning in each locality at 11:00 a.m. of that day as a time to unite in prayer. I also ask all Americans to observe the National Moment of Remembrance beginning at 3:00 p.m. local time on Memorial Day. I urge the press, radio, television, and all other media to participate in these observances.

I also request the Governors of the United States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the appropriate officials of all units of government, to direct that the flag be flown at half-staff until noon on this Memorial Day on all buildings, grounds, and naval vessels throughout the United States, and in all areas under its jurisdiction and control. I also request the people of the United States to display the flag at half-staff from their homes for the customary forenoon period.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-sixth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:22 a.m., May 27, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 27, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on May 28.

**Remarks in a Discussion at  
Vanderbilt University Medical  
Center in Nashville, Tennessee  
May 27, 2004**

**The President.** Thank you all for coming. Please be seated. Tommy, thanks for the kind introduction. You can keep your job for a while. [Laughter] I put him in my Cabinet because I knew how effective he was as a Governor. He was the Governor of Wisconsin. [Applause]

And I knew when I asked him to—don't go overboard for Wisconsin, please. [Laughter] I knew when I asked him to join my Cabinet that he would reform programs that needed reform, focus resources on programs that needed resources, and would do a great job. He really has. He's been a remarkable Secretary of Health and Human Services, and I'm proud he came here today.

We're going to talk about an interesting subject, and it's one that has got a chance to change our country for the better. As you can see, I've surrounded myself with people who probably can—not probably—will be able to explain the subject better than me.

But before we get talking about health care and how to make sure the costs are reasonable and health care is affordable and medical errors are reduced by using information technology, I do want to thank the good folks here at the Vanderbilt University Medical Center for your hospitality. I particularly want to thank Harry Jacobson for welcoming us, for allowing us to use this facility to talk about health care. No better place to talk about health care than at a place that delivers

excellent health care, right here at Vanderbilt. Thanks for having us.

Neal Patel is with us. Where are you, doc? There he is. Neal showed us the new children's hospital, some of the parts of the children's hospital. It's an impressive facility. Thank you for being a doctor. Thank you for caring about America's kids, and thank you for giving us a tour. I want to thank Jim Shmerling, who is the CEO; Bill Stead, who is the chief information officer. Thank you all for coming.

This is a—the reason we're here is because this hospital knows how to use information technology for the benefit of patients and docs. That's why we're here. You're ahead of the country in using technology to your advantage, and we'll talk about that here in a second.

I want to thank my friend Senator Bill Frist for joining us today. Senator, you're doing a heck of a job. You cut your eye teeth here, right? That's where you started practicing? That's good. He married a Texas girl, I want you to know. *[Laughter]* Karyn is with us, a west Texas girl, just like me. We both married above ourselves, didn't we, Senator? *[Laughter]* But Karyn, thank you for coming. I'm proud you're here.

I want to thank Members of the Congress who are here with us today. First, Congressman Jim Cooper from this district. Thanks for coming, Congressman, proud you're here. Jimmy Duncan is with us, Jimmy. And you brought your son John, I see. Thank you for being here. I know Zach Wamp and Kim are here. Thank you all for coming. Appreciate you being here. And Marsha Blackburn is with us today. Marsha, thanks for coming.

I know the mayor is here. Mr. Mayor, I appreciate you coming. Thanks for being here. Fill the potholes, that's the only advice I can give you. *[Laughter]* I'm sure you are.

Today when I landed, I met Phuong Le. Phuong, please stand up for a second, will you? Thanks for coming. I'll tell you why I wanted to introduce Phuong. She is a soldier in the army of compassion. That's why I want you to hear about her. She is a person who just graduated from high school, like a week ago, right, Phuong? Yes, a week ago. For 6 years, she has been volunteering at the Siloam Family Health Center to not only

help people who can't speak English communicate with the caregivers there, but to help provide love for those who hurt. That's what she's there for. The reason I bring up Phuong is because I want to remind you that the strength of this country is in the hearts and souls of our citizens. We're a mighty military power. We will stay that way to make the world more free and more peaceful. We've got a mighty economy. We are a wealthy nation compared to other nations, but our strength is in the hearts and souls of our citizens. That's our true strength. Our strength is found when people take time out of their life, like Phuong has done, to help somebody who hurts.

See, the great hope for America is neighbor loving neighbor. The hope for this country is when somebody who is hungry or needs shelter or needs love can find it when a fellow citizen says, "What can I do to make your life better?" I appreciate, Phuong, you serving as such a great example for the folks here in this community. I call on others to love your neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself. And you can join the army of compassion, which is changing America for the better one heart, one soul at a time. Thanks for coming.

One of the important subjects in America is how do we make sure health care is affordable and available. Part of making sure health care is available is for medicine to use information technology, and that's what we're here to discuss.

I want to talk real quick about some other ways we can help with health care. One, we've modernize the Medicare system. Senator, thank you. Members of the House who voted for the plan, I want to thank you for your vote.

The modern Medicare system begins with making sure seniors have got drug discount cards, and they're now being passed out. And seniors are going to be able to save between 15 to 30 percent off the retail price of most brand drugs and more for generic drugs. As well there is going to be a \$600 credit for poor seniors. This is the beginning of a reform package that will affect seniors' lives in a very positive way, by making sure our drugs are more affordable.

And the cards are out. They're heading out right now. Unlike most Government programs where they say, "The check's in the mail," actually, the cards are in the mail—[laughter]—and people will be able to use those cards to their benefit. They'll also be able to get on the Internet and comparatively shop for drugs. In other words, you can get on the Internet, put in your zip code, and you'll be able to see the price of retail drugs in drug stores close to you and in your community. And that in itself will serve as a way to put pressure, downward pressure through the market, not through Government edict or Government declarations but through the market, for the benefit of consumers. This is a major—the beginning of a major reform to the benefit of our seniors.

We've also got in the—inherent in that bill, what's called health savings accounts. You can put in after-tax money. You can earn interest after tax. You can take out money after tax—put it in tax-free, earn it tax-free, take it out tax-free in order to pay for not only medical costs but also catastrophic care. These are called health savings accounts, which will be a really good vehicle to help control costs and to make sure patient and doctors are the center of the decisionmaking process in health care.

We're working with Congress to expand what's called association health care plans, which will allow small businesses to pool risk, so just like big businesses do to get better prices for their health care plans for their employees.

We've also got to make sure that we continue to expand community health centers—again, appreciate the Members of Congress here. Community health centers are a really effective use of tax payers' money, in my judgment. They provide primary care and preventative care for people who need help with medicine, and it takes the pressure off the emergency rooms. The most expensive place to find health care is an emergency room.

These community centers are being expanded all across America. They want to open up—or expand 1,200 community health centers. That's on top of the 3,000 that exist. We want to see to it that 16 million Americans are taken care of in these community

health centers. In other words, it's a safety net for people. I recognize people aren't covered by insurance. We'd like more people covered by insurance. Until they are covered by insurance, here's a way for people to get good, cost-effective health care, cost-effective for them and, as importantly, cost-effective for the taxpayers.

And finally, in order to make sure that we've got available and affordable health care, the United States Congress needs to pass medical liability reform. Our doctors—if you get sued all the time, you're going to practice defensive medicine. And when you practice defensive medicine, it means somebody's cost is going to go up. In other words, you're worried about winning a lawsuit, and therefore, you're going to do more procedures than might be necessary just to protect yourself. And these lawyers are filing suit after suit after suit, and you know what I'm talking about. That's just the way it is. People ought to have their day in court. But frivolous lawsuits are running up the cost of medicine, and they're running docs out of business. Just talk to docs. Just talk to people in rural America what it's like to try to keep a professional—a group of docs around when these junk lawsuits are making it hard for them to stay in business.

When I got to Washington, I said, "We'll just let the States take care of it," and then I saw what the cost of defensive medicine and increased premiums are doing to our budgets. The cost of Medicare goes up with all these junk lawsuits. The cost of Medicaid goes up with all these lawsuits. The cost of veteran health care goes up for all these lawsuits. It's time for the United States Congress to pass national medical liability reform. It's out of the House of Representatives. You don't have to worry about your United States Senators from Tennessee. They're on board. I appreciate you. We've just got to convince some other ones.

These are all ways to affect cost and to make sure the doctor-patient relationship is central in medicine. What we can't afford to have happen in America is for the Federal Government to decide to run it all. That will not work. America has got—is on the leading edge of medicine for the whole world. We've got the best research and development.

We've got great docs. We've got fantastic hospitals. The Federal Government cannot run the system as well as docs, professionals, administrators, and patients can.

Another way to save money is to introduce information technology into the health care world. One of the amazing discrepancies in American society today is, we're literally changing how medicine is delivered in incredibly positive ways. And yet, docs are still spending a lot of time writing things on paper, and sometimes it's hard to read their handwriting—[laughter]—and therefore, sometimes it's difficult to have the spread of accurate information so that doctors can make good decisions.

The idea of making sure we use information technology starts with setting this goal: Within 10 years, we want most Americans to have electronic health care records. That means your records. And what—you'll hear us talking about it here today. I'll try not—I'll try to give it my best shot. Your records are on—in a digital form that can be transformed—transferred over the Internet, so that if you happen to be traveling somewhere and you get in a wreck, a doctor or emergency physician in Texas can call up the information or ask for information or seek information not only off the card but to your home doctor's office, and they'll be able to know what's wrong with you or right with you, what has been wrong with you and how to treat you.

You can imagine what kind of system that will do. It will cut down the cost of paperwork. It will also cut down on medical errors, which, if you're going to be a patient, that's something you really hope happens. [Laughter] Sometimes information gets lost. Sometimes people inadvertently prescribe the wrong drug because the information isn't correct. And so the fundamental question is: How do we use technology; how do we modernize health care? That's what we're here to talk about. How do we, you know, do the same thing that is happening in other industries to health care? And we believe we can change how health care uses IT. And it starts with the Federal Government. Listen, the VA is doing a fabulous job with using information technology. This hospital is doing a

fabulous job for using information technology, which we will talk about.

And so, one of the first things we're going to talk about is what can the Federal Government do to help. Now, we hired a guy name David Brailer. David's right here to my right. David's an expert on information technology and how it is applied to medicine and to health care. Tommy hired him, see—yes, he's got a pretty good title, the National Health Information Technology Coordinator. [Laughter] The way I look at it, his job is to use the Federal Government's abilities and our Medicare law and our VA and other assets we have to spread this fantastic opportunity throughout America.

And I just want to say one other thing before I turn it over to David. Privacy is really an important part of, in my judgment, of an American system that works well. I don't want some people looking at my records. Of course, my line of work, everybody gets to look at my records. [Laughter] It's too late for me. [Laughter] It's not too late for you, and therefore, as you hear the idea of moving your information across the Internet, you've just got to know it's got to be with your permission. These are your records. It's your health, and you can decide whether or not people can use your records. This is important for people to understand that, that those of us in Government who talk about spreading information also, first and foremost, keep your privacy in mind.

Now with that, David is the Coordinator named on May the 6th. And here he is sitting with the President right here in Vanderbilt talking about his job. But David, tell us what you do, why you do it, and when you're going to finish it. [Laughter]

**Dr. Brailer.** What time is it?

**The President.** Yes, exactly.

**Dr. Brailer.** Well, thank you, Mr. President. And first, let me just say thank you from American medicine for your historic leadership in information technology.

**The President.** Thank you very much. Thanks.

[Dr. Brailer, National Health Information Technology Coordinator, Department of Health and Human Services, made brief remarks.]

**The President.** Good. Let me ask you a couple of questions. One of the interesting challenges—evidently the medical lingo varies. In other words, part of your challenge has been to standardize as well as develop a common vocabulary. Would you explain that so—obviously I can't. Would you explain it, please, so people can understand it better?

**Dr. Brailer.** We have a different vocabulary. Sure, when a physician sees a patient, we write down a problem list, which is the list of issues that's active with that person. We create a label called a diagnosis, which is the formal name that you know. We do procedures, the things that we do to people's bodies whenever they have to have treatments. We make estimations of what is happening with someone, and all of these things are codified in language.

And traditionally in medicine the language has been informal. It's been variable by physician. I might call something hypertension; someone would call it high blood pressure. I might say you have a high temperature; someone says you have a fever. And there are over 50,000 language terms that are in medicine that cover. And the point of standardization is to make it one vocabulary. This is very hard, not just in terms of what the vocabulary is but being able to make this part of the normal daily activities of physicians' days.

**The President.** Yes, see, that's part of the challenge. I'm sure you can envision it. If people call the same disease or symptoms by different names, obviously there needs to be a standardization process. The Federal Government can help. As I understand it, we're quite far down the road in terms of developing the standards.

**Dr. Brailer.** Mr. President, the Federal Government has had an extremely positive effect in the last 2 years. Secretary Thompson set up an effort to take the standards that are being developed in the private sector—the Federal Government hasn't developed the standards—but has taken those and put them into Government procurement, into the contracting arms of Health and Human Services and elsewhere. So they go from being on paper into real systems that are used everyday. And we have a lot more that can be done.

**The President.** Good. I imagine they say "scraped your chin when you fell off the bicycle" the same in Tennessee as they do in Texas, though. [Laughter] What do you think?

Okay, thanks. Good job.

Dr. Jim Jirjis is with us. Jim, thanks for coming. He is the assistant chief medical officer here at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. Appreciate you coming.

**Dr. Jirjis.** My pleasure.

**The President.** Here's your chance. [Laughter]

[Dr. Jirjis made brief remarks.]

**The President.** You helped set up the electronic records here at the hospital?

**Dr. Jirjis.** Correct.

**The President.** So what does that entail?

**Dr. Jirjis.** Well, I have the funnest—second funnest job in the world. [Laughter] Vanderbilt is a wonderful sandbox, I like to say. Harry Jacobson, Bill Stead are visionary leaders, and they have developed an infrastructure that allows guys like me and Neal, whose passion—you know, I was the guy in high school behind the computer—I was also an athlete too, don't make any mistake about it. [Laughter] But when I came to medicine and computers, who knew, at Vanderbilt, I would have a sandbox.

[Dr. Jirjis made further remarks.]

**The President.** Yes, and one final question along these lines. You do prescribe prescription drugs over the—through the Internet yet?

**Dr. Jirjis.** Most of the prescriptions through the Internet, we can't interact with the pharmacies yet, though there's a lot of work going on nationally to try to arrive at that.

**The President.** Yes.

**Dr. Jirjis.** In our hospital, 100 percent of our prescriptions are done in the computer.

**The President.** Which is important.

**Dr. Jirjis.** If I try to order the wrong thing, Bill Stead, even if it's 1 a.m., a little "beep" comes up, says, "You're going to hurt this patient."

**The President.** See, that's really important for people to understand. The ability to make sure that we prescribe the right drug



and the right dosage can be controlled by proper use of medical records, which is really important. And it's cost effective.

I hope you're getting a sense for what we're talking about here. It's a really exciting opportunity. Again, I repeat, we're at Vanderbilt for a reason. It's because this hospital is—and system is innovative and different. And it's on the leading edge of change. It benefits a lot of patients, obviously, in your illustrious career here, one of whom is Bob McNeilly. He's a patient, Bob. He's like your patient, right?

**Dr. Jirjis.** Yes, he is.

**The President.** Bob, welcome.

**Mr. McNeilly.** Thank you.

**The President.** Tell us how electronic records affected you.

[Mr. McNeilly, patient, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, made brief remarks.]

**The President.** How does that work? I mean, you say it communicates with you.

**Mr. McNeilly.** Well, I've got e-mail. [Laughter]

**The President.** Yes, there you go. [Laughter] There you go. You look like an e-mailing kind of guy.

**Mr. McNeilly.** Absolutely. [Laughter] Give me your address, and I'll send you one. [Laughter] There's another advantage also. I've got more than one doctor here at Vanderbilt. I've got, as a matter of fact, two other doctors who are both cardiologists. One calls himself my plumber and one my electrician. [Laughter] They prescribe medications, and I want to make sure that Jim Jirjis knows exactly what they have prescribed and what changes are in my medication. And they, in turn, need to know anything that he's prescribed. This system takes care of that automatically.

**The President.** Yes, that's fantastic. If you're beginning to get the drift here, it not only helps the docs make right decisions; it helps the patients as well. It helps the patients—keeps the patients on a timetable. It reminds patients about patient responsibility, but it also has got—give you peace of mind to know that you're getting the very best care all the time.

**Mr. McNeilly.** Absolutely. I really have a great deal more confidence in the system.

Although, I'm looking forward to the next step, which is to have access to my own medical records, which are computerized now, which really enables me to take charge of my health care even more than I do now.

**The President.** Absolutely. Gosh, thanks. I'm glad you're here. I appreciate you coming.

**Mr. McNeilly.** Thank you. I'm glad I'm still here. [Laughter]

**The President.** All right, we've got J.T. Finnell with us. He's an emergency medicine physician right out of Indianapolis, Indiana. You're probably wondering why we asked somebody from Indianapolis to come. And one of the reasons why is the health care system in Indianapolis has done a fantastic job of implementing and employing information technology.

Is that an accurate description, J.T.?

**John Finnell.** That's correct.

**The President.** All right, well, tell us why you're here.

**Dr. Finnell.** Well, it's race week.

**The President.** Get out of town, huh?

**Dr. Finnell.** That's right. [Laughter]

[Dr. John "J.T." Finnell, emergency medicine physician, Wishard Memorial Hospital, Indianapolis, IN, made brief remarks.]

**The President.** Let me stop you, one question. One of the interesting things that—the reason why Indianapolis is farther down the road, if you notice, hospitals can talk to hospitals, which hasn't happened in many communities. In other words, it's easier to talk intra-hospital system than it is inter-hospital system. And part of the challenge is and the reason we standardize language is so that when a—one emergency room can talk to another emergency room or a State facility. Indianapolis has done a good job of integrating the capacity to talk amongst different facilities. I think that's an accurate statement.

**Dr. Finnell.** That is accurate.

**The President.** Yes, and so the challenge is, by the way, is to do that within a community and then is to get communities hooked up with communities so that the whole—there's a whole nationwide network. That's the real challenge we're going to face in America. Step one was to get the language

standardized so words can travel and be understood on a more common basis. Go ahead. Examples.

[*Dr. Finnell made further remarks.*]

**The President.** Information saves lives, and it saves money. That's what we're here talking about, and we've got a strategy to encourage information—the spread of information technology throughout the entire health care industry to help control the costs and raise the quality of health care. That's what we're here to talk about.

And somebody who can testify—I think you can—

**Jennifer Queen.** I hope so.

**The President.** You will—is Jennifer Queen. She's here as a mom. Tell us about Courtney, your daughter.

[*Jennifer Queen, mother of a Vanderbilt University Medical Center patient, made brief remarks.*]

**The President.** Thank you for sharing that. That's a great—you know, a great story. I saw Courtney. You're right, she's strong. She's doing great.

**Ms. Queen.** Yes, she's our little beautiful angel.

**The President.** She is your beautiful angel.

**Ms. Queen.** We have two little angels, and they're doing real well.

**The President.** That's good. Listen, I hope that story helps you understand—listen, if you're having to tote around written records, not only is it cost ineffective, there's a chance there's going to be errors. And as the system evolves, it puts these records on the computers, on disks. They can move information at lightning speed. You not only save money; you improve the quality of care through the spread of good information. It lets these docs do their jobs. It eases the minds of the patients. They can take Courtney's records with her if she were to go down to Crawford, for example. [*Laughter*] And you can take the records with you.

And it's—we're changing medicine. Medicine's changing. That's what we're talking about. It's changing for the better. We're here because this little center of excellence is on the leading edge of change. And the

goal for our country is that, most everybody—medical records are digitized, and every health care system can talk to each other; every office can talk to each other to share information in a better way, to make sure America's health care system remains the best in the world.

That's what we want. We want only one thing. We want the best health care system in the world for our patients at the best possible price. It can be—it will be achieved. That's what I'm here to tell you. It's going to be achieved. One of the ways we do so is to properly use information technology. I want to thank our panelists for sharing your stories and your information. I want to thank you all for coming to listen. I hope you have found this as interesting as I have.

Let me conclude by telling you, we're lucky to live in the greatest country in the face of the Earth. God bless. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:43 p.m. in the Langford Auditorium. In his remarks, he referred to Harry R. Jacobson, vice-chancellor for health affairs, Neal R. Patel, assistant professor of pediatrics and anesthesia, James E. Shmerling, chief executive officer, Children's Hospital, and William W. Stead, associate vice-chancellor for health affairs and director, Informatics Center, Vanderbilt University Medical Center; Karyn Frist, wife of Senator Bill Frist; Kim Wamp, wife of Representative Zach Wamp; and Mayor Bill Purcell of Nashville, TN.

## Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen of Denmark

May 28, 2004

**President Bush.** Welcome. Thanks for coming. It's always good to be with a friend. Friends are candid with each other. Friends are open, and friends are constructive. And that's the kind of conversation we've just had and will continue to have.

I told the Prime Minister that our Government and our coalition will transfer full sovereignty, complete and full sovereignty to an Iraqi government that will be picked by Mr. Brahimi of the United Nations. He said, "Do you mean full sovereignty?" I said, "I mean

full sovereignty.” I then told him that we’re working closely in the United Nations to get a new Security Council resolution, and we’re making progress on that resolution.

I spoke to Vladimir Putin this morning about the resolution, and we agreed to work together on behalf of the Iraqi people and the new government. I told him that we would come up with an arrangement that would enable us to help the Iraqi people secure their country so that the country can move toward elections. I told him I would continue to work with countries around the world to build support for the new Iraqi government so that the Iraqi people have a chance to live in a free and just society, just like we do.

I also want to thank the people of Denmark for their love of freedom, their support for human rights, and the commitment of troops to Iraq. The moms and dads of those troops need to know they’re performing brilliantly, Mr. Prime Minister. They’re good, strong soldiers who bring great credit to your country. I’m proud to have you here. Thanks for coming.

**Prime Minister Rasmussen.** Thank you very much, Mr. President. I’m happy to be back in the White House. I’m here as a friend and ally. And today I have confirmed that the Danish troops will stay in Iraq. We will stay and finish our job. Our common goal is to assist the Iraqi people in building a new, modern, and democratic society.

We have a lot of negative news from Iraq. What we need now are—is some positive news. And I welcome the efforts to achieve consensus in the U.N. Security Council on a new Security Council resolution which can pave the way for the building of a democratic society in Iraq.

We need a transfer of full sovereignty to an Iraqi government, an Iraqi government which will be provided with all the signs and principles of a sovereign government. From June 30, international military presence in Iraq will be provided at request from this new Iraqi government. Our troops will stay in Iraq as long as the Iraqi government decides.

Finally, we have discussed the tragic events of prisoner abuse in Iraqi prisons. I welcome the assurance that these cases will

be fully investigated and the people responsible will be held accountable. And I welcome that the necessary steps will be taken to make sure that nothing like this will happen in the future.

Finally, I would like to emphasize the importance of strength in transatlantic relations. In a few days’ time, we will commemorate the 60-year anniversary of the Allied invasion of Europe. We owe a great deal to the United States and Europe. Thousands of Americans lost their lives in Europe in the fight against Nazi tyranny, in the fight for freedom. And let this commemoration also be a reminder of our shared values and shared destiny.

Thank you.

**President Bush.** Good job, Mr. Prime Minister. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:01 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Lakhdar Brahimi, Special Adviser to the U.N. Secretary-General; and President Vladimir Putin of Russia.

## Statement on the National Economy

May 28, 2004

One year ago today, I signed into law the jobs and growth tax relief package to jumpstart the economic recovery and create jobs for American workers. With our economy growing at the fastest pace in nearly 20 years and more than 1.1 million more Americans working since last August, it is clear the tax relief is working.

Take-home pay for workers is up, and disposable income for families has increased to record levels. The incentives in our plan for small businesses are producing results as more manufacturers have been reporting increased activity and new orders than at any time in 20 years. I am encouraged to see that the unemployment rate has fallen in 47 of 50 States, because we want everyone who wants to work to be able to find a job.

There is more to do. We must continue to build on this success by expanding growth and increasing prosperity for all Americans. I look forward to working with Congress to pass my six-point plan for economic growth, including making the tax cuts permanent,

and to ensure that our workers have the skills to compete in the changing world.

---

### **Digest of Other White House Announcements**

---

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

---

#### **May 22**

In the morning, at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Austin, TX, where they attended a dinner celebrating their daughter Jenna's graduation from the University of Texas at Austin. Later, they returned to the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX.

#### **May 23**

In the morning, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to New Haven, CT, arriving in the afternoon. Later, they attended a dinner celebrating their daughter Barbara's graduation from Yale University.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

#### **May 24**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the evening, the President traveled to Carlisle, PA. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President has invited the leaders of Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Jordan, and Yemen to meet with G-8 leaders on June 9 in Sea Island, GA.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Hamid Karzai to the White House for a meeting and working lunch on June 15.

The President announced his intention to nominate Carin M. Barth to be Chief Financial Officer of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The President announced his intention to nominate John H. Hager to be Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services at the Department of Education.

The President announced his intention to nominate Veronica Vargas Stidvent to be Assistant Secretary of Labor for Policy.

The President announced his intention to nominate the following individuals to be members of the National Council on the Humanities: Craig Haffner, Richard Quinones, Iris Love, Thomas Mallon, Thomas K. Lindsay, Tamar Jacoby, Harvey Klehr, James Davison Hunter, and Herman Julius Belz.

#### **May 25**

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Jacques Chirac of France to express his condolences concerning the deaths and injuries resulting from the collapse of a roof at Charles de Gaulle International Airport in Paris on May 23, the proposed U.N. Security Council resolution on Iraq, the situation in the Middle East, and other issues. Later, he had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Vienna, OH, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Sidney Harris. Later, he traveled to Youngstown, OH.

Later in the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President declared a major disaster in Iowa and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding on May 19 and continuing.

The President declared a major disaster in Nebraska and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding on May 20 and continuing.

#### **May 26**

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India to congratulate him on assuming his post and to discuss relations between India and Pakistan and other issues. He then had an intelligence briefing.

Later in the morning, the President met with Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with President El Hadj Omar Bongo of Gabon.

Also in the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Aleksander Kwasniewski of Poland to discuss the proposed U.N. Security Council resolution on Iraq, the situation in Iraq, the upcoming D-day anniversary celebration in France, and other issues.

In the afternoon, the President met with Secretary of State Colin L. Powell.

The White House announced that the President has invited Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey to meet with G-8 leaders and regional partners from the broader Middle East on June 9 in Sea Island, GA.

### **May 27**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with President Francisco Flores Perez of El Salvador.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Nashville, TN, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Phuong Le. He also met with Jason Mathews, offensive tackle for the Tennessee Titans of the National Football League.

Later in the afternoon, the President participated in a tour of Vanderbilt University Medical Center. Later, he attended a Victory 2004 reception at a private residence.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Peter Cyril Wyche Flory to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Policy).

The President announced his intention to nominate William Sanchez to be Special Counsel for Immigration-Related Unfair Employment Practices at the Department of Justice.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders: Betty Wu (Chairman), William P. Afeaki, Nina Nguyen Collier, Akshay Desai, Vellie Sandalo Dietrich-Hall, William Kil, John C.

Kim, Jimmy Lee, Joseph Melookaran, Derrick Nguyen, Rudy Pamintuan, Martha Cruz Ruth, Jeffrey B. Sakaguchi, and Kenneth Wong.

### **May 28**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Executive Dining Room, he dropped by a breakfast meeting with Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi, former Senator Bob Dole, and World War II veterans.

The President announced the following individuals to represent the United States at the inauguration of Elias Antonio Saca Gonzalez as President of El Salvador on June 1: Secretary of Commerce Donald L. Evans (head of delegation); H. Douglas Barclay, U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador; Jane Norton; Eduardo Aguirre; Otto Reich; Sylvia Iriondo; and Helen Alvare.

The President announced the recess appointment of Deborah A. Spagnoli as a Commissioner of the U.S. Parole Commission.

The President announced the recess appointment of Kiron Kanina Skinner as a member of the National Security Education Board.

The President announced the recess appointment of Sue Ellen Wooldridge as Solicitor of the Department of the Interior.

The President announced the recess appointment of Charles Johnson as Chief Financial Officer of the Environmental Protection Agency.

The President announced the recess appointment of Ann R. Klee as an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (General Counsel).

The President announced the recess appointment of Kirk Van Tine as Deputy Secretary of Transportation.

The President announced the recess appointment of Cathy M. MacFarlane as Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development for Public Affairs.

The President announced the recess appointment of Dennis C. Shea as Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development for Policy Development and Research.

The President announced the recess appointment of Romolo A. Bernardi as Deputy

Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

The President announced the recess appointment of Juanita Alicia Vasquez-Gardner as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation (State Court).

The President announced the recess appointment of Adam Marc Lindemann as a member of the Advisory Board for Cuba Broadcasting.

The President announced the recess appointment of Edward Brehm as a member of the Board of Directors of the African Development Foundation.

---

### **Nominations Submitted to the Senate**

---

NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

---

### **Checklist of White House Press Releases**

---

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

---

#### ***Released May 24***

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit of President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Bush Invites Leaders From the Greater Middle East to the G-8 Summit in Sea Island

Excerpts of the President's remarks on Iraq and the war on terror at the United States Army War College in Carlisle, PA

Fact sheet: The Transition to Iraqi Self-Government

#### ***Released May 25***

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Iowa

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Nebraska

Fact sheet: Expanding Access to Health Care for Millions of Americans

#### ***Released May 26***

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Bush Invites Turkey to G-8 Summit as Democratic Partner

#### ***Released May 27***

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary: Sudan Peace Agreement

Fact sheet: Transforming Health Care for All Americans

#### ***Released May 28***

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 408, H.R. 708, H.R. 856, H.R. 923, H.R. 1598, and H.R. 3104

---

### **Acts Approved by the President**

---

#### ***Approved May 28***

H.R. 408 / Public Law 108-229

To provide for expansion of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore

H.R. 708 / Public Law 108-230

To require the conveyance of certain National Forest System lands in Mendocino National Forest, California, to provide for the

use of the proceeds from such conveyance for National Forest purposes, and for other purposes

H.R. 856 / Public Law 108–231

To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to revise a repayment contract with the Tom Green County Water and Control and Improvement District No. 1, San Angelo project, Texas, and for other purposes

H.R. 923 / Public Law 108–232

Premier Certified Lenders Program Improvement Act of 2004

H.R. 1598 / Public Law 108–233

Irvine Basin Surface and Groundwater Improvement Act of 2004

H.R. 3104 / Public Law 108–234

To provide for the establishment of separate campaign medals to be awarded to members of the uniformed services who participate in Operation Enduring Freedom and to members of the uniformed services who participate in Operation Iraqi Freedom